

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDE-00 ERDA-05 CIAE-00 H-02

INR-07 IO-13 L-03 NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04

PRS-01 SAJ-01 SAM-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00

DODE-00 NSC-05 /092 W

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P 211530Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5192

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

USDEL SALT TWO GENEVA

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

AMEMBASSY BONN

S E C R E T PARIS 27537

SHAPE FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, MBFR, FR

SUBJECT: MBFR: FRENCH POSITION

1. SUMMARY: ON EVE OF LONDON TRILATERAL WE OFFER OUR ANALYSIS OF POSSIBLE FLEXIBILITY IN THE FRENCH POSITION AGAINST INCLUSION OF FRENCH FORCES IN DATA PROVIDED TO THE EAST OR IN THE CALCULATION OF THE COMMON CEILING. OUR CONCLUSION IS THAT THERE WILL BE NO GIVE IN THE FRENCH POSITION, CERTAINLY IN THE SHORT TERM. THIS CONCLUSION IS BASED ON THE CONSISTENT FRENCH OPPOSITION TO INCLUSION, THE JULY-AUGUST GOF INTERNAL REVIEW (PROMPTED BY HIGH LEVEL US, FRG AND UK APPROACHES) WHICH RESULTED IN A RE-AFFIRMATION OF THE FRENCH POSITION, AND VARIOUS HINTS HERE IN PARIS THAT THE GOF HAS NO THOUGHT OF AGAIN

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SERIOUSLY REVIEWING ITS POSITION UNTIL THE FRG AND US

ELECTIONS HAVE TAKEN PLACE. IN ADDITION WE BELIEVE THAT THE RECENT GOVERNMENTAL CHANGES WHICH GAVE THE GOF A NEW PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER WILL MAKE ABSOLUTELY NO DIFFERENCE IN THE FRENCH POSITION ON MBFR. END SUMMARY.

2. SINCE MISTRAL CONVEYED THE FRENCH POSITION (AGAINST INCLUSION OF THEIR FORCES) TO U.S., UK AND FRG ON AUGUST 23, WE HAVE BEEN SEEKING HINTS OF ANY OPENNESS TO CHANGE IN CONVERSATIONS WITH ASSORTED PARIS CONTACTS. TO DATE WE SEE ABSOLUTELY NO SIGN OF GIVE. OUR FRENCH INTERLOCUTERS REITERATE THAT THE FRENCH POSITION IS CONSISTENT WITH THE STANCE THAT THE GOF HAS TAKEN TOWARDS MBFR SINCE THE BEGINNING OF NATO DISCUSSIONS. ONE CAN SENSE SOME FRENCH EMBARRASSMENT OVER THE FACT THAT IT WAS NOT UNTIL JUNE 1976 THAT THE FRENCH OPENLY ARTICULATED THEIR OPPOSITION TO INCLUSION OF FRENCH FORCES. HOWEVER, OUR FRENCH CONTACTS ARGUE THAT THE FRENCH POSITION WAS IMPLICIT THROUGHOUT THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS AND SHOULD HAVE COME AS NO SURPRISE TO THE ALLIES.

3. OUR FRENCH CONTACTS REITERATE THE STANDARD FRENCH CONCERNS:

--FEAR OF A DROIT DE REGARD OVER ALLIED FORCES IN THE NGA;

--FEAR THAT GOF FREEDOM OF ACTION TO RAISE OR LOWER THE LEVEL OF FRENCH FORCES IN GERMANY WILL BE COMPROMISED, EITHER AS A RESULT OF AN AGREEMENT WITH THE EAST OR AS A RESULT OF COMMITMENTS TO THE FRG REQUIRED TO REACH AN ALLIED MBFR POSITION;

--MISGIVINGS ON THE NUCLEAR ELEMENT OF OPTION III AND APPREHENSION THAT THIS WILL LEAD TO FURTHER RESTRICTIONS ON ARMAMENTS (BOTH CONVENTIONAL AND NUCLEAR);

--MISGIVINGS CONCERNING ANY MEANINGFUL VERIFICATION OF AN ULTIMATE AGREEMENT.

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4. WHILE OUR FRENCH CONTACTS ASSERT THAT THE FRENCH WILL BE READY TO LISTEN TO ANY NEW PROPOSALS THE ALLIES MAY WISH TO OFFER, WE GATHER THAT THE FRENCH HAVE NO INTENTION OF CONDUCTING ANOTHER SERIOUS REVIEW OF THEIR MBFR POSITION UNTIL THE RESULTS OF THE FRG AND US ELECTIONS ARE CLEAR. THE FRENCH APPEAR TO BELIEVE THAT THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE FOR A POLICY LEVEL REVIEW OF MBFR IN BOTH THE

US AND THE FRG FOLLOWING THE ELECTIONS. THE FRENCH THEREFORE BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE FRUITLESS TO ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE THE MBFR DIFFERENCES IN THE SHORT TERM.

5. ALTHOUGH THE SAUVAGNARGUES DECISION CONVEYED TO US ON AUGUST 23 PRECEDED THE RESIGNATION OF THE CHIRAC GOVERNMENT BY ONLY A FEW DAYS, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE NEW PRIME MINISTER OR FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD IN ANY WAY ACT TO TRY TO ALTER THE FRENCH POSITION. MAJOR DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS ARE MADE ULTIMATELY IN THE ELYSEE AND THUS THE GOF POSITION CERTAINLY HAS BEEN APPROVED THERE. THERE IS NOT THE SLIGHTEST HINT THAT BARRE OR GUIRINGAUD WOULD BE AT ALL INCLINED TO ALTER THE FRENCH POSITION.

6. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH OUR CONTACTS, THE FRENCH STATE THAT THERE IS NO URGENCY COMPELLING THE WEST TO RESPOND TO THE SOVIET TABLING OF DATA. THEY TELL US THAT THE SOVIETS ARE WELL AWARE OF FRENCH POSITION. THUS THE NEED FOR A WESTERN RESPONSE IS TACTICAL PRESSURE ONLY RATHER THAN A SUBSTANTIVE NEED.

7. IN SUMMARY, WE ARE SKEPTICAL THAT ANY NEW APPROACHES TO FRANCE WILL BEAR FRUIT. IN THIS REGARD WE NOTE THE BRITISH VIEW (LONDON 13976 DTG 031750Z SEP 76) THAT THERE IS LITTLE POINT IN "CEASELESSLY REPEATING ALLIED CONCERNS TO THE FRENCH..."RUSH

SECRET

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DATA, MUTUAL FORCE REDUCTIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PARIS27537
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760356-0843
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760937/aaaabfmm.tel
Line Count: 142
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ACDA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 MAR 2004 by morefirh>; APPROVED <10 AUG 2004 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MBFR: FRENCH POSITION
TAGS: PARM, FR, MBFR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006